

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COURT OF APPEALS

In the Matter of SHANNET MERRIWEATHER
and TAYQUON JONES, Minors.

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY,

Petitioner-Appellee,

v

ANNETTE JONES,

Respondent-Appellant,

and

JEFFREY MERRIWEATHER and TONY
STREETS,

Respondents.

UNPUBLISHED

April 22, 2004

No. 250206

Kent Circuit Court

Family Division

LC No. 01-062100-NA

Before: Cavanagh, P.J., and Murphy and Smolenski, JJ.

MEMORANDUM.

Respondent-appellant appeals from the order of the trial court terminating her parental rights to her minor children pursuant to MCL 712A.19b(3)(c)(i), (g), and (j). We affirm.

Respondent-appellant contends that the trial court erred in finding that clear and convincing evidence supported termination of her parental rights. She contends that there was no evidence that she had neglected the children, only that a third party had perpetrated sexual abuse upon Shannet. Respondent-appellant further argues that she substantially complied with the requirements set forth by the agency for reunification. We disagree.

At the time the children were removed from her care, respondent-appellant was living with a relative who Shannet claimed had sexually abused her. Although respondent-appellant claimed to believe her daughter, she continued to live with the relative and remain financially dependent on him for some time. Thereafter, respondent-appellant established steady employment and maintained independent housing, but she appeared unable to grasp the serious threat that sexual predators pose to her children as she continued to associate with known offenders of criminal sexual conduct involving minors, including the father of her younger child.

Also paramount was the extreme emotional problems of the children. After removal from her care, it was discovered that the children were suffering from serious emotional problems, apparently arising from abuse and neglect while in the care of respondent-appellant. Though respondent-appellant participated in counseling, parenting classes, and visits with the children, she never demonstrated the ability to adequately address their emotional needs. The trial court, therefore, did not clearly err in finding that the statutory grounds for termination had been established by clear and convincing evidence. MCR 3.977(J); *In re Miller*, 433 Mich 331, 337; 445 NW2d 161 (1989). Similarly, based on the above-noted evidence, we find that the trial court did not clearly err in finding that termination of respondent-appellant's parental rights was not contrary to the best interests of the children. MCL 712A.19b(5); *In re Trejo*, 462 Mich 341, 356-357; 612 NW2d 407 (2000).

Affirmed.

/s/ Mark J. Cavanagh
/s/ William B. Murphy
/s/ Michael R. Smolenski